765 Funeral rites are performed only when a king is buried, but after each death certain mourning customs are observed which are more or less elaborate depending on the social position of the deceased. If the deceased is a common Murundi and also father of a family, his widow (or widows) and children observe a mourning period of seven days by not leaving the homestead. Presumably they are afraid of the spirit of the deceased when going outside the house so shortly after his death. Inside the hut they introduce numerous inovations and rearrangements as though they wanted to lead astray and divert the spirit of the deceased should he decide to return. The entrance to the residential hut is changed to another side, new stones are found for the fireplace, the place of the bed is moved, all the tools are rearranged, and so forth. After the seventh day every [783] member of the family takes a thorough bath in a stream, probably as a symbolic cleansing from the defilement caused by the deceased. Then the whole family have their heads shaved as a symbol of purification and mourning, and during the following two months they always wear clothes of mourning when leaving [292] the house, i.e., barkcloth which is neither dyed black, the normal color, nor painted with patterns (No. 19, p. 163) but [822] has its natural reddish-brown color; thus red is the color of mourning here. The name of the deceased is not mentioned any [551] more so as not to cause his malevolent spirit to appear, and all other persons or objects bearing the same name are given new ones.

Naturally a deceased mutwale is given more respect than 766 a common Murundi. For the former the kiranga performs the 211 ceremonies of the "holy spear" (see p. 134), and a tree is 768 planted on his grave [115] as a memorial (imana) which is inviolable. The family of the deceased leaves the homestead and settles in another place; the huts of the deceased disintegrate and disappear, and the fig trees that form the fence gradually grow into magnificent trees. Nobody may cut them down for [689] wood on pain of death (No. 19, p. 205). The sites where chiefs once lived, both in Urundi and Ruanda, can be picked out anywhere in the landscape by these groups of trees arranged in a circle where they once enclosed the courtyards (Plate 29a).

Sacred Cows

233
778 The idea for this select group is traced back to Ruganzu. These special herds are known as inyambo, or long-horned cattle, and they are always selected among the finest in the land. They are not all of the same color.

Among other hues, the following predominate: dusty red (ibihogo by' issine), purplish red (ibihogo by' igaju), red speckled with [822] white (ibihogo by' imyeru), and black and white, which are all favorite colors of the Batutsi.

Special cowherds are in charge of watching over those herds, which usually graze in the Buganza.

They are led to the capital for festivals or public celebrations. The finest animals, known as inyamibga or indatwa /510/ (from the word kurata, "to show off"), lead the herd.

There is usually only one or two of these in each herd, and they are accustomed to walking ahead of the others. Their horns, brow, and neck are covered with rows of beads and small antelope horns which serve as ornaments (imitako n' imiheha). Also included [824] are stems of the sacrosanct umwishwa grass, which the cowherds also wear on chest and head on numerous occasions. Then special [535] dances take place which are organized by the keepers of the herd or even by the Batwa and in which the animals participate with their mooing.

The cows are quite familiar with this kind of sport, and they seem to take an interest in it and watch the motions of the dancers. The latter emit special guttural cries all the while, in order to excite the animals further.

Performances of this sort are highly esteemed by the Banyarwanda and attract large crowds.

After the celebration the sacred cows return to their Buganza pastures. Their keepers treat them with great care and are the only ones permitted to milk them, just as they are the only ones to drink their milk.

The calves are gorged with milk and weaned quite late.

[262] Although the Banyarwanda are extremely fond of meat and even eat animals who died a natural death, they are strictly forbidden

695 The last two allegations imply that sad consequences could result if a person expresses intentions that are hostile to the king. The person making the statement publicly announces that if he told a lie he would willingly suffer persecution for threatening the sacred person of the king. Nevertheless, the Batutsi, who could probably set a record for lying, use this phrase constantly.

In doubtful cases where the testimony of witnesses is not at hand or is not sufficiently credible, as well as in cases where the use of sorcery is suspected, the poison test (kihango) is resorted to. The poison test is conducted by the babandwa [members of secret societies who conduct ceremonies].

In Kissaka the poison is dissolved in water and handed to both parties in two cow horns. This gives the mubandwa an opportunity to influence the outcome directly and to use his own judgment in determining the guilty one. Although this makes it very easy for a person to misuse the poison test, the people of Kissaka be-
[797] lieve in it. Even the Christians do, in spite of the otherwise very great influence of the mission. The poison test seldom results in death in Ruanda, for the person taking it can immediately spit and vomit. The poison is not always drunk, for not infrequently the mubandwa is satisfied to dip his thumb into the poison and stick it into the mouth of the person, who may immediately expectorate. In such cases the effect is purely a psychological one. [285] Father L. Classe, who lived in the country seven years, never heard of a death caused by the poison test.

Another very important form of evidence is testimony from the entrails of chickens killed for this purpose. We shall discuss this somewhat more fully below in connection with religious practices.

Quite independent of the chicken oracle, there is a chick oracle that is conducted in the following way. The accused takes a very small chick and carries it in his hand a whole day. If
● [823] the chick dies, the man is guilty, yiera bura (he is black). If the chick does not die, the man is innocent, yeira [sic] bwera (he is white). A very strange color association for the Negro world (see page 145).

All forms of evidence and allegation, such as the poison test, the chicken oracle, the spear oath, and the Musinga oath, are